

The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team

Canyon View Junior High School
Canyon Road
P.O. Box 250
Huntington, Utah 84528

April 16, 2003



Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
PO Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Canyon View Junior High School
Canyon Road
P.O. Box 250
Huntington, Utah, 84528**

April 16, 2003

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**Steven O. Laing, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

OFFICE OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Patti Harrington, Associate Superintendent

**Vicky Dahn, Director
Curriculum and Instruction**

**Georgia Loutensock, Specialist, Accreditation
Curriculum and Instruction**

Salt Lake City, Utah

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....	ii
Utah State Board of Education	iii
Emery School District Board of Education and District Administration	1
Canyon View Junior High School Administration and Staff.....	2
Canyon View Junior High School Mission Statement and Belief Statements	3
Members of the Visiting Team	4
Recommendations to State Accreditation Committee	5
Visiting Team Report.....	5
Chapter 1: School Profile.....	6
Chapter 2: The Self-Study Process	6
Chapter 3: Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness	7
Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals	7
Curriculum Development.....	8
Quality Instructional Design	9
Quality Assessment Systems	10
Leadership for School Improvement	10
Community Building	12
Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning.....	13
Chapter 4: Northwest Association of Schools and of Colleges and Universities (NASCU) Standards I-XI.....	13
Chapter 5: School Improvement Efforts – Action Plan	13
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team	14

FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 16, 2003, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Canyon View Junior High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Larry W. Davis is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Canyon View Junior High School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Canyon View Junior High School.

Steven O. Laing, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

District 1

Teresa L. Theurer
66 Canterbury Circle
Logan, UT 84321
Phone: (435) 753-0740

District 2

Greg W. Haws
5841 West 4600 South
Hooper, UT 84315
Phone: (801) 985-7980

District 3

Edward Dalton
1323 Bryan Road
Erda, UT 84074
Phone: (435) 882-4498

District 4

Joyce W. Richards
930 East 5000 South
Ogden, UT 84403
Phone: (801) 479-5370

District 5

Kim R. Burningham
932 Canyon Crest Drive
Bountiful, UT 84010
Phone: (801) 292-9261

District 6

Tim Beagley
3084 South 3550 West
West Valley City, UT 84119
Phone: (801) 969-6454

District 7

John C. Pingree
1389 Harvard Avenue
Salt Lake City, UT 84105
Phone: (801) 582-5635

District 8

Janet A. Cannon
5256 Holladay Blvd.
Salt Lake City, UT 84117
Phone: (801) 272-3516

District 9

Denis R. Morrill
6024 South 2200 West
Taylorsville, UT 84118
Phone: (801) 969-2334

District 10

Laurel Brown
5311 South Lucky Clover Ln
Murray, UT 84123
Phone: (801) 261-4221

District 11

David L. Moss
1964 Hawk Circle
Sandy, UT 84092
Phone: (801) 572-6144

District 12

Mike Anderson
455 East 200 North
Lindon, UT 84042
Phone: (801) 785-1212

District 13

Linnea S. Barney
1965 South Main Street
Orem, UT 84058
Phone: (801) 225-4149

District 14

Dixie Allen
1065 South 500 West
Vernal, UT 84078
Phone: (435) 789-0534

District 15

Debra G. Roberts
Box 1780
Beaver, UT 84713
Phone: (435) 438-5843

Pamela J. Atkinson*

1123 South 20th East
Salt Lake City, UT 84108
Phone: (801) 583-2375

Steven O. Laing

Executive Officer

Sara V. Sinclair*

1340 North 1500 East
Logan, UT 84341-2851
Phone: (435) 754-0216

Twila B. Affleck

Secretary

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12/20/200

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CANYON VIEW JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

Administration

Larry W. Davis..... Principal

Counseling

Nancy Karpowitz Counselor

Support Staff

John Bissell
Roma Brotherson
Diane Farley

Peggy Gordon
Richard Rowley
June Sherman

Jolene Stevens

Faculty

Ferd Allred..... Physical Education, Health
Shirley Baltzer Library
David Bird..... Chorus, General Music
Rick Bird..... Resource
Alyce Childs..... Library
Curt Collard Elementary Algebra, Geometry, Pre-Algebra
Reed Fehlberg Band
Mark Hansen..... Technology, Health, TLC
Donn Jeffs FACS 8, Keyboarding, FACS 9, TLC, Physical Education
Thelma Livingston Reading, English 7 & 8, Honors English 9
Mark Luce Pre-Algebra, Math 7, US History
Doug Mecham..... World Geography, US History, Utah Studies
Eric Mortensen..... Spanish, Science 7, TLC, Computer Technology
Lee Moss..... Earth Systems, Science 8
Jackie WeiHING..... Art I, Art II
Bill Wright Reading, English 9, English 8, English 7

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Gregg Profitt, Ecker Hill Middle School, Park City School District,
Visiting Team Chairperson

Judy Christensen, North Sevier Middle School, Sevier School District

Cade Douglas, North Sevier Middle School, Sevier School District

Nick Gibson, South Summit High School, South Summit School District

Eric Moser, South Summit High School, South Summit School District

MISSION STATEMENT

To prepare every student with knowledge, skills, values, and vision for life-long success.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Students must feel safe and secure while at school in order to concentrate their efforts on academics.
- Parents, teachers, friends, and the community all influence student learning.
- Student motivation to learn influences student achievement.
- Student motivation to learn is increased when students believe in themselves and value their self-worth.
- When teachers accept all students and genuinely care for them, students are more likely to experience success.
- All students learn in different ways.
- Positive learning experiences influence future learning experiences.
- If students have a strong foundation of knowledge and skills on which to build, they are more likely to experience success at the next level.
- When teachers focus on individuals and provide opportunities for students to progress at their own level, students are more likely to experience success.
- When teachers demonstrate a passion in teaching the subject matter, students will respond favorably.
- When students are enthralled in learning, they will discipline themselves.

VISITING TEAM REPORT

CANYON VIEW JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Canyon View Junior High School is located in Huntington, Utah, in the Emery County School District. Two-hundred-thirty-six students are enrolled in grades 7-9. Sixteen students are classified as ESL; 48 percent of students qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. Canyon View Junior High students live in several small communities located in northern Emery County. The teacher-student ratio for the 2002-2003 school year is 23.7/1. Canyon View Junior High has developed school-business partnerships with Emery TelCom, PacifiCorp, and the United States Forest Service.

One hundred percent of students and faculty and 90 percent of parents recently completed the Indicators of School Quality survey. The survey's findings include:

- All stakeholders feel that there is "needed improvement" in parental support.
- Parents and teachers have confidence in school administration.
- Teachers believe that there is a need for professional development opportunities.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the Visiting Team's analysis of the school's profile?*

The Visiting Team notes that the school has engaged in an examination of standardized test scores. SAT and State CRT scores are included in the school's profile document.

The Visiting Team found that the school profile documents a multiplicity of opportunities for student participation in clubs and other extracurricular activities.

The Visiting Team concludes that the school profile document is well organized and the format is congruent with USOE accreditation format.

The Visiting Team notes that the school profile document provides evidence of the improvement process and serves as a positive indicator of the level of faculty involvement and buy-in to school accreditation and improvement.

The Visiting Team recognizes that the school has included thoughtful action plans in the school profile.

- b) *What modifications to the school profile document should the school consider for the future?*

The Visiting Team suggests including lists or documentation of faculty licensure and endorsements in the school's publication. (It should be noted that this request was made and completed on the day of the visit, April 16, 2003.)

The Visiting Team suggests that the school team update the 2002-2003 Canyon View Junior High School Accreditation & School Improvement Self-Study by adding a table of contents and tabs to mark each section of the self-study.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The Visiting Team suggests that the school and district explore the demands placed on teachers by extracurricular sports, activities, and clubs. The opportunities provided for students by these opportunities may compete with valuable faculty time, energy, and other resources.
- The Visiting Team suggests that the school continue to monitor the FTE allocation devoted to the Comprehensive Guidance program. Though the 476:1 ratio is close to the Northwest Accreditation standards, the challenges faced by junior high students may exceed the capacity of a half-time counselor.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The Visiting Team agrees that the Canyon View Junior High school community is engaged in a purposeful self-study and school improvement process. Staff, student, and parent anecdotes support the work documented in the 2002-2003 Canyon View Junior High Accreditation & School Improvement Self-Study. As with any systemic change initiative, the Visiting Team finds varying levels of individual involvement, understanding, and acceptance. However, the participation and commitment of key leadership groups (school departments, administration, counseling, Student Council, School Community Council, and PTA) is evident.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The Visiting Team agrees that the school's self-study is a meaningful reflection of the school's vision, purpose, strengths, and areas for improvement. The major

commendations and recommendations that conclude this report flow from the work done by the school, documented in the Canyon View Junior High self-study, and confirmed by the Visiting Team's observations, April 16, 2003.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Canyon View Junior High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Responsible Citizenship
2. Resourceful Thinking Skills
3. Effective Communication Abilities
4. Positive Self Image
5. Life-Long Learning Capabilities

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The Visiting Team observed the school mission statement posted in a visible area of each and every room in the building, and saw that the school has made a great effort to share the vision with all stakeholders. Parents have been invited to participate in developing the vision and mission of the school. Surveys, notices, and a school newsletter have been created to facilitate a collaborative process for the vision of the school. Staff and students appear to be moving in the same direction in working toward the goals and vision stated in the mission statement of Canyon View Junior High.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The Visiting Team found the beliefs of the school to be defined in great detail. In visiting classrooms we found proof that the staff is working toward achieving success in all DRSLs. In the narrative description of the process to create beliefs, there is strong evidence that all staff members are deeply committed and dedicated to educating and building successful students.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

It is evident that the school's mission statement and beliefs align directly with the DRSLs of the school. School-wide programs have been developed to provide support, as have the needed guidelines to determine achievement of DRSLs. The alignment of the DRSLs to the mission and beliefs of the school is a direct reflection of the commitment of the staff to reach their goals.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

Each department meets or exceeds the standards of the Utah Core Curriculum. The Counseling Department meets standards described in the Comprehensive Guidance program, and does a comprehensive, out-of-district peer review on a three-year basis. Each department addresses the standards in the Utah State Core Curriculum for its specific area. The Language Arts program addresses all areas of reading, listening, writing, speaking, and viewing. All of the core subjects address the objectives of the SAT exams in teaching those subjects. Textbook selection practices in social studies are in harmony with state and national standards in the curriculum.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

There was evidence, from observations of classes and from the school's desired results for student learning, that there is a definite correlation between practice and stated goals. The students exhibited good manners and citizenship during the visit. All classes observed by the Visiting Team contained students on task, participating in activities, and listening, which appeared to demonstrate their involvement in developing thinking skills. Students were observed speaking, writing, listening, and using technology, which gave evidence of their learning communication skills. There were no indications of rebellious attitudes in students, such as would be evidenced by extreme dress or behavior. This gave the team the impression of a positive overall self-image on the part of students.

Lifelong learning is addressed in the desired results for student learning, is a part of the mission statement, and is evident in the technology labs. The teachers put into practice an emphasis on reading and the Madeline Hunter model of instructional process. Positive feedback was used by teachers in every classroom setting observed by the Visiting Team.

Other practices that contribute to the desired results of student learning include the Top Cat Achiever program to reward good citizenship, the citizenship probation program, the harassment policy, the integrity program, and the tracking program. Each of these programs is an example of intentional efforts to produce the desired results for student learning.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

The staff has done an excellent job of providing opportunities for actively engaging students through the student government and Student Council, where students learn leadership skills. The Consumer Science and Business Technology Department has many classes that provide active involvement through computer technology, Technology, Life, and Careers, clothing construction, food and nutrition, physical education, and other practical elective courses.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

Teachers were observed using a variety of teaching techniques such as lectures, demonstrations, lab activities in science, cooperative groups, and student reports and presentations. Cooperative learning was a tool used by a variety of teachers. Some teachers used tactile learning, while others used visual stimulation, and others used auditory stimulation. The variety of learning styles of students was recognized, as evidenced by the different styles of teaching observed.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

The opportunity for students to take books home and leave them there during a course, and also to have classroom sets of texts available so that students didn't have to carry books back and forth between home and school, supported the students' needs. An intentional focus on reading also addressed students' need to read better. The practice of leaving the labs open before and after school helped students to get additional help when needed and make up missed assignments. Arrangements are also made for science students to check equipment out and take it home when necessary to complete assignments.

The Homework Helper system for peer tutoring is an additional help to students. The SIS system is also a great tool for communicating student progress to parents so that they can be involved in the process of tracking student progress. Electronic mail between parents and teachers is also an excellent communication tool for

supporting student learning. Apparently, teachers also make themselves available to students both before and after school for remediation or enrichment.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The Stanford Achievement Test and Utah Core Testing for math, English, and science all provide assessment opportunities for academic achievement. The students feel the importance of achieving and doing well on assessments. Students attribute high scores to good teachers who care about and help students. They also recognize the importance of good scores for future ACT testing, as well as career resumes, etc.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

Various methods of classroom assessment are done in each department, such as the Six Traits of Writing Assessment in Language Arts, as well as technique, written, recitation, and timed tests in keyboarding. Other forms of performance assessment are done in quiz bowls and department competitions. In addition, teachers across the curriculum are encouraged to have specific assignment rubrics, so that students know exactly what is expected before they start the assignment or project, and to use these rubrics as evaluation tools when the assignment or project is completed.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

In annual summer workshops, the faculty meets together to review and analyze the results of Stanford Achievement exams and Utah Core tests. They then break into smaller groups for further, more specific department analysis and use these criteria to update action plans for improving student performance and improving test scores for the upcoming year.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The Visiting Team found that the leadership of the Canyon View Junior High School appears to support and foster academics by the programs that are created and maintained. Teachers seem to feel comfortable creating their own lessons based on the State Core Curriculum. The leadership shows support by allowing

creativity while expecting excellence and effort. The staff also offers a variety of assessments to monitor student achievement and therefore adjust instruction.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

Programs and activities are created and maintained in an effort to employ effective decision making. Each program appears to be carefully selected to fulfill a DRSL or other belief in the mission of the school. The faculty and staff meet each Tuesday to collaborate and share ideas. (It is possible that the departments and grade levels could meet more often.) All staff members are trained in Bloom's Taxonomy and higher-level thinking skills.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The Visiting Team observed that the staff has written on the assessment results and circled possible areas of strength and weakness. This would be proof that staff is monitoring and reflecting on student achievement. The leadership holds a summer meeting to evaluate assessments and determine goals and plans for the next year. In visiting with teachers the Visiting Team discovered that some teachers make direct adjustments to their curriculum and instruction related to test results.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

In discussing a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment with the parents and staff of Canyon View Junior High, the Visiting Team found that great efforts have been made to improve character education and the learning environment. The majority of the students at Canyon View Junior High are polite and kind to one another, and students report that they feel safe. The leadership of the school has instigated new policies that provide stewardship to the students. Some examples are the harassment policy, the Top Cat achiever program, citizenship probation, and the integrity program. It is important to note that each of these programs has factors that are easily monitored for evaluation.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The leadership of Canyon View Junior High has shown that they are using resources to work toward the school's goals and achieve the DRSLs. The school leadership provides departments and organizations with an annual budget to be used at their discretion. While this allows for creativity, it is done through a process of

collaboration. Resources are put to use after reviewing faculty and staff input. The Visiting Team also found that the resources made available through school-business partnerships are used to benefit students, DRSLs, and the mission of the school. Also, going through the accreditation process has given the school and leadership a chance to reflect on decisions related to resources.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The Visiting Team found that the school leadership and staff are empowering the community as much as possible. The school sends out notices, school newspapers, and surveys in an attempt to communicate with the school community. As a result of a survey, the school found that most stakeholders know that there is a potential area of improvement regarding parental support and involvement. The leadership needs to continue to find ways to better involve the community and share the responsibility for student learning.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The Visiting Team recognized a variety of things that build a sense of community and positive relationships within the school. The school addresses these issues by outlining citizenship policies and expectations in a student handbook. The school has also instituted specific harassment and integrity policies. The harassment policy is geared toward having students treat each other with respect, while the goal of the integrity policy is to make students more aware of values such as integrity, honesty, and dependability.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

The school community is extended through the use of many vehicles. Parents can be more involved and aware through the use of the SIS network, the PTA, and mailings that the school sends out. The school has an active relationship with the local mental health agency (which will take referrals of students with personal problems that may be hindering their academic development) and the local interagency council (which supports families by providing mentors and other aid).

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

All teachers are trained using the Madeline Hunter model. Teachers who are new to the district attend a workshop to receive this training. Other teachers in the district are required to attend “refresher” courses during the school year. Teachers at the school communicated to the Visiting Team that the school is very good about allowing teachers to attend workshops and conferences that will enhance their professional development. Teachers also expressed that the school is very supportive of teachers wanting to further their education. The Visiting Team notes that there are teachers currently enrolled in programs working toward advanced degrees.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

Teachers expressed to the Visiting Team that the school is open to the discussion of new ideas. Teachers attend a weekly meeting during which ideas and issues are discussed, and are allowed a part in the decision-making process through voting. The school is active in implementing programs and that will improve learning, such as the peer tutoring program and the Homework Helpers program.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (NASCU)

Canyon View Junior High School is not a member of NASCU.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The action plan is adequate, spelling out action steps, persons responsible, timelines, communication plans, and evaluation. However, the Visiting Team recommends that departments and focus groups revisit many of the action plan evaluations; specific evidence of success must be spelled out for each action step. Some positive examples from the 2002-2003 Canyon View Junior High

Accreditation and School Improvement Self-Study include: “At least 80% of ninth graders will leave Canyon View Junior High with a complete four-year plan,” and “Check each week to determine how many students are in [homework] class specifically for mathematics.”

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

Teacher anecdotes and school profile excerpts provide evidence that there is a level of school-wide commitment to the action plans and the improvement process. There is also some evidence of system or school district support for school improvement (e.g., “Communicate and coordinate with high school Spanish Teacher,” and “Work with Emery High School English teachers to assess student knowledge and prioritize our teaching,” and “Access state educational TV programming and make available to faculty and staff”).

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?*

The Visiting Team agrees that follow-up processes described in Parts 5 and 6 of the 2002-2003 Canyon View Junior High School Accreditation and Improvement Self-Study are sound, and the members of the Visiting Team are confident that the action plans will be monitored, evaluated, revisited, and renewed.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the parents, students, faculty, staff, and administration of Canyon View Junior High for the genuine efforts they’ve put into the school improvement process; not only has the school seriously engaged in self-study, but also school leaders have taken the time and energy to document the school’s efforts in a professional, thoughtful, and organized manner in the Canyon View Junior High self-study. There is evidence of much involvement from a variety of school community stakeholders.
- The Visiting Team commends the school community for its efforts in fostering positive student citizenship and character. The Visiting Team found a beneficial atmosphere in the school’s halls and classrooms: Students move in an orderly fashion and are treated with dignity and respect by their teachers. The Canyon View Junior High self-study documents that teachers, staff, and administrators value and stress positive character traits in their students.

- There is evidence that the school makes great efforts to provide a variety of school-home communications. Through the SIS, parent-teacher conferences, PTA, and various school publications, parents can learn about school events and student progress. These efforts are appreciated by parents and should be maintained.
- Canyon View Junior High and its feeder schools in the system, are to be commended for interdisciplinary and vertical team curriculum efforts. For example, 7th grade students are trained in reading strategies and tutoring skills for work with 3rd grade students; the language arts and art teachers combine efforts across disciplines to create meaningful assignments.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school community probe and clarify the school community's definition of "parent support and involvement." Although perception instruments and sentiments indicated a desire for increased involvement, the Visiting Team discovered many facets of parent support (e.g., parent-donated trees for a science project; 100 percent returns of school-parent surveys; Latino participation at a special parent-school night; and attendance of athletic events, concerts, and special events). The Canyon View Junior High community should further examine the concept of "parent involvement" to determine whether this area should be a primary focus. Though parental involvement is important, school effectiveness and student achievement are more dependent on a guaranteed and viable curriculum and the use of proven instructional methods.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school devise a process for identifying specific areas for individual professional growth. The school may then plan staff development opportunities based upon identified needs. Student achievement data should drive all professional development planning and activities.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school formalize and schedule the dates and times for focus group, department, or grade level meetings. Teacher collaboration is established as a powerful factor to increase student learning. Establishing and scheduling meetings ensures that focused collaboration will take place.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue its efforts to gather, disaggregate, and utilize data from standardized tests and other assessments, as described in the Canyon View Junior High self-study, Part 6 (Test Data Analysis). In certain subject areas there may be a disconnection between faculty perceptions regarding student achievement on standardized tests, and actual student success as evidenced by levels of mastery.